ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

GUIDE TO

THE

BUDDHIST RUINS OF SARNATH

BY

DAYA RAM SAHNI, M.A., RAI SAHIB,

Superintendent, Hindu and Buddhist Monuments, N. C.

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PREFACE.

THIS little pamphlet is one of a series of Guide Books which the Archæological Survey of India is gradually providing for the use of visitors to places of interest. During the past fifteen years, the Archæological Department, under the guidance of Sir John Marshall, has explored a large number of ancient sites that had hitherto lain buried under the ground. The Buddhist site near Sarnath, four miles north of Benares, possesses a special interest as it was here that after attaining divine wisdom at Gaya, Gautama Buddha preached his first sermon, or, as it is described in the Buddhist sacred texts, began 'to turn the wheel of the good law.' The excavation of the site has not yet been completed, but it is obvious that most of the principal monuments have already been unearthed and a few of these have been identified with tolerable certainty.

A glance at the Plan of Excavations which accompanies this pamphlet will show that the part of the site so far excavated is divided into two distinct areas. The southern area contains *stupas*, a class of Buddhist structures raised to enshrine relics of saints, etc., or to mark spots of special sanctity. The northern area was reserved for buildings for the residence of monks and nuns. The only exception to this division, so far noticed, is the monastery designated as Kittoe's Monastery in the Plan, which is situated in the *stupa area*.

The route, the visitor is recommended to follow over these remains, is indicated by a red line in the Plan of Excavations. The buildings are described

in the same order. It was felt from the outset that the descriptions in the first edition of this Guide, published in 1911 were unduly brief. This defect has been remedied in the present edition without entering into unnecessary details.

The handbook is compiled from accounts of the excavations published in the Annual Reports of the Archæological Survey of India for the years 1904-05, 1906-07 and 1907-08[1], and the valuable summaries contributed by the Director-General of Archæology to the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. I have also derived much help from Dr. Vogel's introduction to my Catalogue of the Museum of Archæology at Sarnath.

DAYA RAM SAHNI.

LAHORE,
12th February 1917.

[1] Exploration of the site was resumed in 1914-15 by Mr. H. Hargreaves, Superintendent, Hindu and Buddhist Monuments, Northern Circle, his operations embracing the areas to the east, west and north of the Main Shrine and resulting in the discovery of numerous *stupas*, sculptures and inscriptions ranging in date from the 3rd Century B.C. to the 12th Century A.D. The portable antiquities recovered have been deposited in the Museum. See *A.S.R., 1914-15, Excavations at Sarnath.*

GUIDE TO THE BUDDHIST RUINS OF SARNATH.

THE Buddhist remains of Sarnatn are situated some four miles to the north of the city of Benares. In ancient Buddhist texts these remains are called by the name of Rishipatana or Mrigdava. The first name is explained by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian, who travelled in India in the first half of the 5th century A.D., as meaning "the fall of the sage," *i.e.*, the place where a Pratyeka-Buddha on hearing of the near enlightenment of Gautama-Buddha attained *nirvana*, that is, died at this place. The latter name enshrines a legend which runs as follows :—In one of his previous existences, Gautama Buddha was the lord of a herd of deer which roamed the large forest where Sarnath is now situated. His cousin Devadatta was the king of another herd of deer in the same forest. At this time, the king of Benares wandered about hunting and killing the deer of the forest. The Bodhisattva Gautama Buddha, the king of the deer, approached the king and offered to send a deer each day for the king's food if he would refrain from such promiscuous destruction of his followers. The king agreed to the proposition and went away home. So each day a deer from the respective flocks was sent to the king. Now, among the herd of Devadatta there was a doe big with young and when her turn came to die she remonstrated with the Bodhisattva saying that although she was ready to die it was not humane to kill an unborn child. The Bodhisattva was moved and replied that he would that day take

her place and die. So he made for the king's palace and when the latter in great astonishment enquired of him the reason for his coming, the king of the deer told him all about the doe and offered himself in her place. The king of Benares was deeply touched and replied "I am a deer in human form, you are a man in the shape of a deer." He also directed that the slaughter of the deer should cease immediately and gave up the forest for the entire use of the deer. The forest was hence called the Deer-Park. General Cunningham suggests that the modern name Sarnath is derived from "Saranganatha" meaning "lord of the deer," *i.e.*, Gautama-Buddha. It is interesting to observe that Saranganatha is also an epithet of the Brahmanical deity Siva, and the name is borne by the little Mahadeva shrine situated half a mile east of the Buddhist remains of Sarnath.

In the inscriptions discovered on the site, the locality is invariably referred to as the Dharmachakra or Saddharmachakrapravartana-Vihara, *i.e.*, "the monastery of the turning of the wheel of the good law." For it was here that Gautama Buddha, after attaining divine wisdom under a *pipal* tree at Gaya, preached his first sermon on the sacred law he had discovered in the 35th year of his life. This event is believed to have taken place in the year 528 B.C. The recipients of the sermon were his five former comrades, Ajnata-Kaundinya and others, who had kept him company during six long years of his austerities but who had deserted him on the eve of his enlightenment. The text of the lecture was supplied by "the four noble truths" (Sanskrit *chatvari arya-satyani*) of Buddhism. They are enumerated in a short Pali inscription, cut on the top of a stone umbrella discovered in 1906-07 by

Sir John Marshall in the area to the west of the Main Shrine, and may be rendered as follows: "Four are, ye monks, the noble truths. And which are these four? The noble truth about suffering, ye monks, the noble truth about the origin of suffering, the noble truth about the cessation of suffering, and the noble truth about the way leading to the cessation of suffering." This sermon is one of the four principal events of the life of Gautama Buddha, which are his birth at Kapilvastu, his enlightenment near Gaya, his first sermon at Isipatana (modern Sarnath) and his demise at Kusinara (modern Kasia in the Gorakhpur district). The sacred texts of the Buddhists tell us that one of the injunctions, the great Teacher gave to his disciples shortly before his demise, was that they should pay regular visits to the four places referred to above. This commandment has been kept faithfully by the Buddhists from the time of the Buddha to the period when these holy places were involved in ruin and became totally forgotten. The great popularity enjoyed by Sarnath, the birthplace of the Buddhist doctrine, is eloquently proved by the large abundance of religious buildings and other monuments that were built and rebuilt on this spot during the many centuries of its existence by the pious laity and monks and nuns. The remains of these buildings have now been brought to light by the Archæological Survey of India, and the locality has again become a place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists who visit it in large numbers and have built a monastery of their own not far from the site.

Sarnath is also holy ground to the Jainas, who look upon it as the scene of the asceticism and death of Sri Amsanatha, the thirteenth

predecessor of Mahavira, the historic founder of Jainism. The modern temple near the Dhamekh *stupa* is dedicated to this saint. It is to be observed, however, that the only Jaina antiquities discovered at the excavations of Sarnath are a few images of the Jaina patriarchs of the mediæval period. These sculptures must have been brought from elsewhere and put up at Sarnath when Buddhism was on its decline. The same must have been the case with the Brahmanical sculptures, twenty-five in number, which were unearthed among the ruins of Sarnath. The most noteworthy among these is the unfinished colossal statue, in late style, of Mahadeva piercing the demon Tripura with his trident, now placed in the north-west corner of the central hall of the new Museum at Sarnath.

Nothing is known about the history of the Deer-Park during the three centuries that followed the preaching of the first sermon by the Buddha, for no antiquities of that period have yet been found. We may, therefore, suppose that such members of the religious order founded by the great Teacher as settled at the Deer Park were content, as were the hermits of that time, with simple huts composed of branches and leaves of trees (Sanskrit *parna-sala*). The image of the Buddha had not yet come into existence, and the need for Buddhist shrines had not arisen.

The earliest Buddhist monuments known to exist in India are the relic towers or *stupas* raised by the Buddhist Emperor Asoka over the corporeal remains of the Master, which he obtained from eight earlier *stupas* in which these remains had been originally enshrined on his death at Kusinara (modern Kasia in the Gorakhpur district). The

number of these *stupas* which the Emperor erected, as a means of paying worship to the relics of the Master, soon after his conversion to Buddhism by his spiritual teacher Upagupta, is stated to have been 84,000, but this is no doubt an exaggeration. Some of the *stupas* of Asoka were in their turn opened by Kanishka, the Scythian King of Northern India, who deposited the relics thus obtained in new *stupas* of his own. One of these *stupas* with a casket containing three small pieces of the Buddha's remains was discovered near Peshawar by Dr. D. B. Spooner of the Archæological Department a few years ago. These relics were presented by the Government of India to the Buddhist community of Burma, where they will be enshrined in a suitable Pagoda at Mandalay. Other monuments of Asoka that have come down to us are his magnificent monolithic columns which he erected in the course of a pilgrimage to the Buddhist sacred places about the year B.C. 249 and his celebrated edicts which he had engraved on rocks.

At Sarnath three Asokan monuments have been unearthed, and these are the earliest and most important relics hitherto found at this site. The Asoka pillar which came to light to the west of the temple, referred to in the pamphlet as the Main Shrine, has suffered irreparable damage and only a small portion of it is now standing in position. On its west face is an edict issued by the Emperor Asoka as a warning to the monks and nuns residing in the Deer Park against schisms. What necessitated such a step on the part of the august patron of the Buddhist church at that early stage in its history we do not know.

The next monument which most probably dates from the time of Asoka is the brick *stupa* or relic

tower situated to the south of the Asoka pillar, generally referred to in the Archæological Survey Reports as the Jagat Singh *stupa* as it was demolished, in 1794 A.D., by a minister of that name. The third monument of the same epoch is the monolithic railing which was discovered in 1904-05 under the floor of the south chapel of the Main Shrine. It must have been erected round some object of exceptional sanctity, possibly marking the very spot where Gautama Buddha was then supposed to have delivered his first sermon. To the Sunga period (circa 200 B. C.) belonged the stone railing, some posts and rails of which were found built in the walls of a later structure. The inscriptions carved on several of these parts show that the cost of the railing was contributed by a number of donors, monks, nuns and lay members. We note that two of these pillars were, in the Gupta period, *i.e.*, the fourth or fifth century A.D., converted into lamp posts for the " Principal shrine of the Lord Buddha."

The inscriptions discovered at Sarnath throw some light on the different sects that have occupied this monastery. From three of these inscriptions we gather that about 300 A.D., the whole establishment was in the hands of the Sarvastivadin priests of the old or orthodox school of Buddhism. It is also apparent from one of the same three epigraphs that Sarnath had, before this, been in the possession of another sect the name of which has not been preserved. That the Sarvastivadins did not remain in power for a long time is proved by an inscription of the 4th century engraved on the Asoka pillar by the teachers of another sect, the Sammitiyas, a branch of the orthodox Vatsipurtrika sect. The latter had a much longer régime for, when the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Thsang visited Sarnath in

the 7th century A.D., they still occupied the predominant position at Sarnath.

The Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hian and Hiuen Thsang, who visited the holy places of the Buddhists in India in the 5th and 7th centuries respectively, have left us valuable information regarding the Deer Park. The former tells us that in his time the Deer Park possessed four large topes and two monasteries with monks residing in them. In the time of Hiuen Thsang the Deer Park was in a much more prosperous condition, and not less than 1,500 priests resided in it. Of the numerous *stupas* and other religious buildings described by him in his itinerary, the principal shrines were a magnificent temple containing a life size brass image representing the Buddha as turning the wheel of the law, a stone *stupa* built by Asoka and a stone pillar erected by the same Emperor. The last two of these have already been referred to. The temple which contained the brass image of the Buddha must evidently have been the same as the principal temple of the Lord referred to above, which most probably stood on the site now occupied by the Main Shrine.

The religious buildings of Sarnath continued in use until the end of the 12th century A.D., when they were destroyed in 1193 A.D., by Shihabu-d-din Ghauri when he defeated Jai Chand, the Raja of Benares, and destroyed a large number of temples and images. It is obvious, however, that already before their final destruction, these buildings had suffered more than once from wanton destruction at the hands of hostile invaders or from the neglect of the devotees. But on each occasion they were readily built or renewed by pious votaries who visited

the place from all parts of India. The earliest invaders were perhaps the white Huns who under the leadership of the tyrant, Mihiragula, overran the Gangetic plains in the beginning of the 6th century A.D. That the Buddhist buildings of Sarnath were probably plundered during these invasions receives support from the fact that General Cunningham found a large collection of statues of the 4th or 5th century A.D. packed together in a small room which, he believed, had been hidden away in it on the occasion of one of these invasions.

We possess indirect evidence of another serious attack on these buildings. We learn from an interesting Sanskrit dedicatory inscription engraved on the base of a statuette of the Buddha (No. B (c)1 in the Sarnath Museum) that the principal monuments of the Deer Park were restored by two brothers Sthirapala and Vasantapala in the reign of Mahipala, king of Bengal. This took place in the year 1026 A.D., *i.e.*, only nine years after the capture of Benares by Mahmud of Ghazni, so that we may assume that this restoration was necessitated by the wholesale devastation carried out at Sarnath by the great iconoclast.

The pious brothers referred to in the last-mentioned inscription also erected "a new shrine of stone pertaining to the eight great places." The eight great places are not defined, and the real character of the shrine is uncertain. Dr. Vogel suggests that the shrine was so called as it contained a sculpture representing the eight main events of the Buddha's life. One such sculpture, though of an earlier period, was discovered at Sarnath and is noticed in the sequel.[1]

[1] No. C(*a*) 3 on p. 44.

The restoration carried out by the Pala brothers referred to above must have been of a lasting character. The principal buildings of Sarnath were existing in good condition in the year 1058 A.D., and in the first half of the 12th century A.D. Kumaradevi, the Buddhist queen of Govindachandradeva of Kanauj (Sanskrit Kanyakubja), restored the image of Buddha in the act of turning the Wheel of the Law. The inscription recording this pious act of queen Kumaradevi makes the image of the Buddha referred to as old as the time of Asoka, but this must have been due to a misconception, as images of the Buddha were unknown at that early date.

It has been stated above that the final destruction of the Sarnath buildings was presumably the work of Shihabu-d-din Ghori, and the condition of the remains that have now been unearthed shows clearly that their overthrow was due to a violent catastrophe accompanied with plunder and fire. What portions remained of these buildings were soon buried under their own débris and dust so that the only structures that remained above the surface were the large *stupa* locally known as the Dhamekh *stupa* and another large *stupa* mound which was destroyed by Jagat Singh. A third Buddhist monument that survived was the mound called by the villagers the Chaukhandi and which is situated at a distance of half-a-mile from the main site of the Deer Park.

History of Exploration.

The Deer Park ceased to exist as a place of worship and fell completely into oblivion until an accidental discovery at the end of the 18th

century A.D., drew the attention of the European officers of Benares to its great antiquarian importance and led the way to its exploration by archæologists. This discovery was made in the year 1794 A.D., by the workmen of Babu Jagat Singh, Diwan of Chait Singh, the Raja of Benares, when they were employed in digging for bricks, on one of the monuments of Sarnath, for the construction of a market place in Benares which is still known as Jagat Ganj. The relics discovered on this occasion created a widespread interest in the ruins of Sarnath. The earliest excavations, of which we are aware, were carried out in 1815 A.D., when Colonel C. Mackenzie examined some of these remains, and presented the sculptures found by him to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. They are now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, but no account of his explorations seems to have been published. Gen. Sir Alexander Cunningham, the first Director-General of Archæology in India, carried out valuable excavations at this site at his own expense from December 1834 to January 1836. He opened the Dhamekh *stupa* and the Chaukhandi mound and exposed a mediæval monastery and a temple to the north of the Jagat Singh *stupa*. He also unearthed a collection of statues which may be seen in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Some forty sculptures and numerous carved stones were left by General Cunningham at Sarnath. Some of these were used in the construction of two bridges on the river Barna as appears from the following passage in the Reverend Mr. Sherring's book, *The Sacred City of the Hindus*, which tells us that "in the erection of one of the bridges over the Barna (Duncan's bridge), forty-eight statues and other sculptured stones were removed from

Sarnath and thrown into the river, to serve as a breakwater to the piers; and that in the erection of the second bridge, the iron one, from fifty to sixty cart-loads of stones from the Sarnath buildings were employed."

General Cunningham's excavations were followed by those of Major Markham Kittoe, "Archæological Engineer" to the Government in 1851-52, who was then employed in designing and building the Queen's College at Benares. He excavated numerous *stupas* "four and five deep built one over the other," around the Dhamekh *stupa*, and the greater part of a quadrangular structure to the west of the latter *stupa* which he identified as a hospital because he found in it a number of stone mortars and pestles. The recent excavations have shown that it was, in reality, a monastery of the usual type. Major Kittoe also commenced the clearance of another monastery, designated as Kittoe's monastery in the Plan of Excavations which accompanies this pamphlet. Major Kittoe's excavations were continued first by Mr. E. Thomas, C.S., a Judge and coin collector, and afterwards by Mr. FitzEdward Hall, Professor at the Queen's College. Some diggings were also carried out by Mr. C. Horn, C.S., in 1865; and Mr. A. Rivett Carnac, C.S., discovered a Buddha image in 1877. We do not hear of any further excavations on this site until the year 1905, though excavations for materials by contractors and villagers must have continued even in this interval.

The excavations described above extended over a hundred years or more and it might well have been thought that the site had yielded up all its antiquarian treasures especially because General Cunningham had already recorded his opinion that

no further excavations on this site were advisable. Recent explorations have, however, shown how untenable General Cunningham's conclusion was, for it is now evident that he had totally failed to penetrate the lower and earlier strata where lay buried antiquities of the greatest value and interest. These new excavations were first conducted, with the sanction and advice of the Archæological Department, by Mr. F. O. Oertel in the cold weather of 1904-05. Mr. Oertel unearthed the Main Shrine, the Asoka Column with its magnificent capital and a galaxy of *stupas* all around it, as well as a very large number of sculptures and inscriptions. The excavations remained in abeyance in the year 1905-06 but in 1907 they were resumed under the personal supervision of Sir John Marshall, C.I.E., Director-General of Archæology in India, with the assistance of Dr. Sten Konow, then Government Epigraphist for India, and one or two other officers of his Department. These excavations embraced nearly the whole of the site except the area exposed by Mr. Oertel and supplied, for the first time, the real key to the ancient topography of the site. It was then found that while the southern portion of the site was occupied by *stupas* and chapels, the northern area had from early times been set apart for monasteries for the residence of monks and nuns. In the latter area, Sir John Marshall brought to light, on two distinct strata, four monasteries the upper one of which is a very extensive building of about the 11th century A.D. The other three monasteries which came to light at a much lower level are assignable to the 2nd or 3rd century A.D.

The portable antiquities, sculptures, inscriptions, etc., discovered in these and previous excavations

are now preserved in a suitable building erected by the Government of India in 1912. They range in date from the 3rd century B. C., to the late mediæval period. The majority of them, however, belong to the Gupta period, *i.e.*, the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., and have enabled Sir John Marshall to establish the existence, at Benares, of an independent school of sculpture and architecture during that age. It is further to be observed that as none of the Gupta kings professed Buddhism, the sculptures and other antiquities of that period recovered at Sarnath must have been the gifts of private individuals.

THE MONUMENTS.

Chaukhandi.

This is the name of a large ruined structure which the visitor to Sarnath passes to the left of the road half a mile before reaching the main site. The monument consists of a lofty mound of brickwork locally known as Chaukhandi, or the "square edifice," surmounted with an octagonal tower making a total height of eighty-four feet from the level of the ground. The octagonal tower is much later than the ruined structure underneath it, for, according to a Persian inscription carved on a stone slab over its northern doorway, it was erected by the Mughal Emperor Akbar, in the Hijri year 996, corresponding to 1588 A.D., to commemorate a visit to this spot by his father Humayun. An ascent to the top of the tower affords an extensive and pleasing view of the country around, the most interesting landmarks being the Dhamekh *stupa*

of Sarnath to the north, and the slender minarets of the mosque of Aurangzeb to the south. It is interesting to observe that the two minarets of the mosque appear as one, the front one hiding the other, and thus showing that the mound is situated nearly due north of that mosque.

Mr. Oertel exposed the lower parts of the *stupa*[1] in 1904-05. We find that the *stupa* stood on a basement consisting of three square terraces each about twelve feet broad and the same in height. The *stupa* itself had disappeared, but a portion of its plinth, which remained above the highest platform, was octagonal in plan with starlike points at the angles. Another fact revealed by the excavations is that, whereas the core of the structure is composed of solid brickwork laid in clay mortar, the terraces are supported on rows of hollow cells. The outer walls of the terraces were adorned with niches which must have originally contained images. Hiuen Thsang estimated the height of the *stupa* to be three hundred feet, but Mr. Oertel puts it at about 200 feet. Among the sculptures that came to light in the excavation of this structure were two sculptured slabs showing leogryphs ridden by human warriors,[2] which presumably adorned the flank walls of the stair which led up to the top of the basement of the *stupa*.

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[1] A *stupa* is a solid tower, which was built either to enshrine the corporeal remains of a saint or other great personage, or as a memorial of some remarkable event. Edifices of this kind were erected by the Jainas as well as by the Buddhists. The earliest form of the *stupa* was hemispheric like the inverted bowl of a Buddhist monk. According to the Buddhist texts, the corporeal remains of Buddhas or universal kings only were considered fit to be enshrined in *stupas*. In later times, however, even ordinary Buddhist monks and teachers received this distinction.

[2] These are now preserved in the Sarnath Museum and are numbered C (*b*) 1 and 2.

The *stupa* seems to have been erected in the early centuries of the Christian era. In 1835 A.D., General Cunningham sank a well into the structure from the floor of the octagonal tower of Akbar down to virgin soil. As he did not find any relics in it, he concluded that it must be a memorial *stupa* and identified it as the one near which Gautama Buddha, when coming from Gaya to Sarnath, first met the five recluses, Kaundinya and the rest. The only circumstance, which militates against this assumption, is the fact that, whereas the *stupa* seen by Hiuen Thsang on this spot had no niches, the one unearthed in the Chaukhandi mound is adorned with such niches in the terrace walls. The identification proposed by General Cunningham, however, appears most probable, as the position of the Chaukhandi *stupa* agrees almost precisely with the bearing and distance of the said *stupa* from the Deer Park, and there is no other *stupa* in this direction which would answer to the description of the Chinese pilgrim.

The brick platform adorned with a flag, by the side of the big mound, is modern. Here the villagers sacrifice goats for the propitiation of evil spirits.

The Deer Park.

Half a mile to the north on the road we come to the Deer Park itself. The new stone building we notice on our right hand side is the Archæological Museum in which have been arranged all portable antiquities discovered on this site. It is advisable to go over the ancient buildings first. For the convenience of the visitor, a red line has been shown

in the accompanying plan to indicate the route which he is recommended to follow when going over the remains of the Deer Park.

Kittœ's Monastery.

Immediately on entering the site we notice on our right the remains of a Buddhist monastery occupying a much lower level than the road. In the annexed plan it is designated as **Kittœ's Monastery**, because, as stated above, it was mainly exposed by Major Kittœ's excavations in the middle of the last century. The monastery has now perished with the exception of small portions in the north and east sides. But we learn from General Cunningham that it originally measured 107 feet along each side externally and, like most Buddhist convents known to us, consisted of an open courtyard surrounded by passages supported on pillars which gave access to ranges of cells on all four sides. The rooms in it numbered 28, which were, as usual, small, each one just big enough to accommodate a single monk and furnished with a separate door. The central room of the north row which was larger than the others was probably the sanctuary of the monastery. No images were found in it but the stone pedestals on which they stood are still extant. The monastery opened to the south. In the centre room on this side there was a square elaborately carved block, which General Cunningham believed to be "the seat of the teacher for the daily reading and expounding of the Buddhist scriptures." The well in the middle of the courtyard is coeval with the monastery though the parapet and pulley are new additions. The

water of this well is sweet and is eagerly drunk by Buddhist pilgrims.

From the evidence of the thickness of its walls, General Cunningham concluded that the monastery must have had three or four storeys and been one of the thirty monasteries seen by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Thsang in the seventh century A.D.

Major Kittoe's excavations gave ample proof of the fact that the monastery had been destroyed by a great fire applied by the hand of a hostile invader. The conflagration was "so sudden and rapid as to force the monks to abandon their very food" for the explorer found "the remains of ready made wheaten cakes in a small recess."

The Jagat Singh Stupa.

A little further on in the plan, a red line starts from the road towards the north-west. This is the path which we shall take in going over the various buildings described below. The first object which arrests the eye on the left is the ruin of the large brick *stupa* which was demolished by Jagat Singh in 1794 A.D. In its relic-chamber Jagat Singh found a green marble casket which was enclosed in a bigger stone. The casket contained a few bones, some decayed pearls, etc., which were committed to the Ganges. The outer stone is now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The casket has disappeared. In the same structure, though evidently at a higher level, Jagat Singh found an inscribed Buddha image (Bc 1) the base of which is now preserved in the Archæological Museum at Sarnath. The inscription carved on the sculpture

records that in the year 1026 A.D., in the reign of Mahipala of Gauda, two brothers named Sthirapala and Vasantapala restored a *stupa* of Asoka and the entire establishment of the Deer Park and also repaired a stone temple " of the eight great places."[1] The Asoka *stupa* referred to in this epigraph is probably the Jagat Singh *stupa* itself as we shall see later on. The temple of the eight great places has not yet been identified.

The depredations of Jagat Singh had reduced the structure to a mere shell, the superstructure and the core having been totally removed. In spite of this, the excavations carried out in 1907-08 around the base of the *stupa* have ascertained for us a fairly complete history of the monument. It is now found that the outer shell of the *stupa* consists of concentric rings of brickwork, which is all that is left of the several rebuildings undergone by the *stupa* at different periods. The original structure, which is only 49 feet in diameter, dates back most probably to the time of Asoka.[2] The bricks of which the structure is composed are large like those of other Asokan buildings and are of three different sizes. Most of the bricks are slightly wedge-shaped, the smaller end being laid nearer the centre of the *stupa*, but no effort seems to have been made to bond the courses together. As is usual with *stupas* of this period, the Jagat Singh *stupa* was nearly hemispheric in form and it is believed that the same form was maintained in the later additions.

[1] Probably the eight great places of pilgrimage are meant. *Cf.* p. 8 above.

[2] This fact is of considerable interest, for, if this *stupa* is really the one erected at Sarnath by Asoka, the bones that were found in the green marble casket referred to in the text may have been a portion of Gautama Buddha's own corporeal remains.

The first rebuilding of the *stupa* appears to have taken place in the early centuries of the Christian era, and the second about the 5th or 6th century A.D. The circular ambulatory, portions of which were exposed in 1907-08, must have been added at the latter re-building. The passage is 15 to 16 feet wide. The encircling wall, which is about 4′5″ high, was pierced with doorways at each of the cardinal points, just as are the railings round the *stupas* of Bharhut and Sanchi. The ambulatory was filled up on the occasion of a later renewal of the *stupa* about the 7th century A.D., and access was then gained to the *stupa* by four flights of steps all of which have been laid bare. A short inscription on the topmost step of the stair on the south side dates from the 2nd or 3rd century A.D., but the steps themselves are probably earlier than that date. The latest or 8th re-building took place about the 11th century A.D., and must have been coeval with the erection of the monastery, designated as Monastery I in the Plan of Excavations.

The numerous smaller structures exposed all round the Jagat Singh *stupa* are mostly memorial *stupas* raised by pilgrims as tokens of their visits in the mediæval period. One of these, situated to the west of the big *stupa*, had an inscribed Buddha statuette in a niche. The image dates from about the 5th century A.D., and must have been rescued from an earlier building. It will be seen that a few *stupas* to the north of the Jagat Singh *stupa* have, like it, been rebuilt several times.

A short distance to the north of the Jagat Singh *stupa*, half way between it and the Main Shrine, was found the colossal red sandstone statue of Buddha with its umbrella (B(*a*)1 in the Museum),

which was carved at Mathura and erected at Sarnath about the 2nd century A.D.

The Main Shrine.

The next building which rises before us as we proceed northward is a conspicuous structure situated some twenty yards north of the Jagat Singh Stupa, and distinguished in the Plan of Excavations as the Main Shrine. The structure is square in plan measuring 68 feet along each side, and standing at some places to a height of eighteen feet. From the south, west and north faces of the building project rectangular chapels which are only accessible from the outside. The chapels on the north and west have lost their images, but the pedestals which supported them remain. In the chapel on the south side was found a headless statue of Buddha, which being of Gupta date, must have been rescued from an earlier shrine and re-erected in the chapel referred to.

In the same chapel, Mr. Oertel unearthed beneath the floor a square monolithic railing of the usual type, standing around a brick *stupa*. The railing is cut out of a single block of sandstone and the skilful workmanship and the high polish it has undergone proclaim it a product of the time of Asoka in the 3rd century B. C. Each of the four sides of the railing measures 8′ 6″ in length by 4′ 9″ in height, and is composed of four uprights, square in plan, with three lozenge-shaped cross-bars between them. So far, two ancient inscriptions have been noticed on the railing, one on the front of the lower stone on the east side and the other on the south side. Both the epigraphs indicate that the railing was in the possession of the teachers of the Sarvastivadin

sect in the 3rd or 4th century A.D., to which date these inscriptions should be assigned on epigraphical grounds. A close examination of the inscription on the east side will, however, reveal the fact that the last word of this record is a remnant of an earlier inscription which was written in a script of the 1st or 2nd century B. C., and in the Prakrit or vernacular dialect of that period. The rest of the epigraph obviously contained the name of some other sect of the Buddhists. It was rubbed off, in the 3rd or 4th century A.D., by the teachers of the Sarvastivadin sect who substituted their own name in place of the old sect. This alteration was evidently made by the later sect to assert their own superiority at Sarnath. It was for the same reason, too, that the same inscription was re-engraved on the south side of the railing in the Sanskrit language. This circumstance shows that the spot occupied by the railing must have been a particularly sacred one though it is difficult as yet to ascertain its precise nature. The small brick *stupa* inside the railing was opened in 1906-07 but revealed no relics of any kind.

The walls of the Main Shrine are unusually thick from which it may be surmised that they supported a lofty superstructure, but what its design was cannot be ascertained. Nor is the inner plan of the building now clear owing to the considerable changes which the shrine has undergone since its first construction. So much, however, is certain that the temple faced towards the east. Two capitals adorned with scenes from Gautama Buddha's life and his previous existences belonged to the entrance of the temple and may be seen in the Museum (D (*g*) 5 and 6). The building is constructed of bricks, though the foundations or lower

parts of the walls are faced with stones, most of which must have been secured from older buildings. It will be noticed that the bricks are everywhere laid in mud. The walls were plastered on the outside with *kankar* lime, which was afterwards white-washed.

As it stands, the Main Shrine is relatively a very late monument having been erected about the 11th century A. D. This is shown, apart from other considerations, by the presence of three short inscriptions engraved upside down at the south-west corner of the building. It appears very likely, however, that the shrine is built on the site of an important old sanctuary which, according to Hiuen Thsang, commemorated the spot where the first sermon of Gautama Buddha was preached. The recent excavations give proof of the existence of earlier remains underneath the Main Shrine, and it may be expected that further explorations will throw light on their real character. The small *stupa* inside the Maurya railing in the south chapel probably belongs to the same early period.

Around the Main Shrine, the excavations laid bare a thick concrete pavement which extended some forty feet in every direction. On the east side, the excavations also revealed a broad paved approach which has been excavated for a length of over 150 feet. The low parapets on either side of this passage were formerly adorned with votive statues, etc., a large number of which were found in the course of the excavation in this area. Among other sculptures unearthed on this approach we may particularly mention the slab C (*a*) 3 sculptured with the eight principal scenes from Gautama Buddha's life which is now preserved in the Museum

of Archæology at Sarnath and will be found described later on.[1] Another paved passage reached the Main Shrine from the north, where the remains of a large monastery of about the same date have been unearthed.

The smaller structures unearthed in the area around the Main Shrine exceed 150 in number. They range in date from the first or second to about the twelfth century A.D., and were undoubtedly erected by pilgrims and other devotees. The majority of these structures are *stupas*. Only two chapels are well preserved. They are situated close to the south of the Main Shrine and face towards it. The large rectangular court situated to the east of the Main Shrine and marked 36 in the Plan of Excavations appears to have been a lecture hall. The thinness of its walls shows that the room had either no roof at all or only a light wooden one supported on wooden columns. Against its back wall we notice a solid platform, the purpose of which cannot be ascertained. The south, west and north walls of this building were furnished on the outside with a railing of the usual type, a small portion of which may be seen on the north wall. A stone (D(*a*) 39) which belonged to the coping of this railing bears an inscription of about the 2nd century B. C., though the building to which the railing is now attached must be two or three centuries later in date. One compact group of *stupas* situated to the north-east of the Main Shrine marked some particularly hallowed spot. The largest of these *stupas* is that numbered 40 in the Plan of Excavations. The whole of its superstructure has disappeared. The plinth was opened

[1] See p. 44.

and a little below the top was found a layer of unbaked clay tablets and a little lower down a number of stone sculptures of the 4th or 5th century A.D. The clay tablets contained a figure of the Buddha and the Buddhist creed in characters of the 8th or 9th century A. D. These and the sculptures must, therefore, have been thrown into the structure at the time of a reconstruction probably in the late mediæval period. We may also notice another *stupa* marked 13 in the Plan of Excavations and situated to the north-west of the Main Shrine. It was near this structure, that the umbrella fragment bearing the Pali inscription referred to above (p. 2) was found.

The Asoka Pillar.

We may now turn to the Asoka Pillar, which was brought to light by Mr. Oertel a few yards to the west of the Main Shrine in 1904-05. The capital and some fragments of the shaft were found lying close to the western wall of the Main Shrine. The lower portion of the column which is standing *in situ* protruded slightly above the concrete floor which surrounds the Main Shrine. The destruction of the Asoka Pillar must, therefore, have taken place some time after the erection of the Main Shrine. The stump of the column, which is in position is about 17 feet high with a diameter of about 2′ 6″ at the bottom; and judging from the broken fragments that have come to light, the whole original height of the column including the lion capital must have been about 50 feet. The column rests on a large slab of stone measuring 8′ by 6′ by 1′ 6″. Like the other Asoka columns, the Asoka Pillar of Sarnath was a monolith cut out of a single

block of sandstone quarried at Chunar some 20 miles south of Benares. Above the shaft came the lion capital 7′ high and above it again a stone wheel 2′ 9″ in diameter. The capital and a few pieces of the wheel are now in the museum and will be described later on. The whole of the column has undergone a high polish so that the stone may be easily mistaken for marble. The lower 7½ feet of the shaft which is left undressed was buried in the ground from the outset, and its upper limit marks the level of the ground around the column at the time of its erection. Between this level and the concrete floor around the Main Shrine, the excavations brought to light the remains of several floors which were laid one above the other as the ground around the column gradually arose. The latest of these which came to light three feet below the concrete floor was composed of stone slabs and measured 18′ 10″ from north to south and 16′ 9″ from east to west. 2½ feet below this floor were found four brick walls, which surrounded the column and supported some sort of a platform around it.

On the west face of the portion of the column that is *in situ* is carved an edict of Asoka, the celebrated patron of Buddhism who ruled over the greater part of India from 273 to 232 B. C. The inscription consisted of eleven lines the first two of which have been destroyed when the pillar was overthrown. The rest of the record is marvellously well preserved. The edict is composed in the vernacular of Asoka's time and purports to be a warning to the monks and nuns residing at Sarnath against creating a schism in the Buddhist Church. It may be translated as follows :—

"Thus saith 'the beloved of the gods.' The Church is not to be divided. But whosoever, monk

or nun, shall break up the Church, shall be made to don white garments and dwell in a place which is not a residence for the clergy. Thus must this edict be announced in the Order of Monks and in the Order of Nuns.

Thus saith His Majesty. One such edict hath been inscribed for you in the place of assembly that there it should remain. And even such another writing ye must inscribe for the laity. The lay people, too, should attend each fast-day in order to be inspired with faith in this edict. Also on each fast-day, without fail, every officer should attend the fast-day service to be inspired with faith in this edict and to make himself acquainted therewith.

And as far as your district extends, ye must everywhere make known the edict according to the letter thereof. So, too, in all fortified towns and provinces, ye must cause it to be made known according to the letter thereof."

It will be observed that in this, as in other edicts of Asoka, the king is referred to merely under the epithets of *Devanam piya* and *Piyadasi laja* meaning "the king, the beloved of the gods and the well-wisher of all." The identity of this king with the Maurya king Asoka has now been conclusively established by an edict recently discovered near the village of Maski in the Hyderabad State, as it clearly mentions the name of Asoka as the author of the edict.

The Asoka column also bears two other inscriptions of later dates. One of them which continues, as it were, the last line of the Asoka inscription is dated in the reign of a certain Raja Asvaghosha in the 40th year of the era of Kanishka. The other inscription which is assignable to the early Gupta

period, *i.e.*, circa 300 A.D., was recorded by the teachers of the Sammitiya sect to which a reference has been made above.

Leaving the Main Shrine our route runs over the paved floor of a broad passage, north-east of the Main Shrine. Like the approach on the east of this building, this passage also is flanked on either side by a line of *stupas* and other structures. In the middle of the west line was standing a large statue (B(*a*) 2 in the Museum) of Gautama Buddha of the first or second century A.D., and near the east line was discovered the large sculptured lintel (D (*d*) 1) exhibited in the verandah of the Museum. A little distance to the north of the spot where the lintel was found, were exhumed the eleven stone posts of a railing of the first or second century B.C., which have also been transferred to the Museum.

The Monastery Area.

The whole of the northern area of the site was in ancient times set apart for the residence of monks and nuns and may, therefore, be designated the Monastery Area as distinguished from the southern or Stupa Area. Sir John Marshall's valuable explorations in this area have already given back to us the remains of four important monasteries. One of these, which came to light near the surface of the ground, must have been an extensive building. The other three monasteries were excavated underneath the remains of this monastery at the depth of sixteen to eighteen feet below the ground level.

Monastery I.

The latest of the four monasteries referred to above is called Monastery I in the accompanying

Plan of Excavations. It dates from the 11th or 12th century A.D., and must have been an imposing building. The part of the monastery so far exhumed extends over an area more than 760′ from east to west, and consists of a large block of buildings situated to the due north of the Main Shrine, and preceded by two large open courts on the east. On the south side the entire building was bounded by one long and straight wall 4′ 4″ wide which extended probably right on to the western limits of the site. The northern boundary wall has not yet been traced out.

The principal block of the monastery, which stands due north of the Main Shrine, is designed after the usual fashion of Buddhist monasteries. The court in the middle is open to the skies. Around it on all sides were rows of chambers for the residence of monks or nuns, though there were no verandahs or passages in front of them. The rooms have disappeared, but the plinth on which they stood has survived in a good state of preservation. The floor of the rooms was several feet higher than the floor of the inner court, which was reached by flights of steps on all sides. The steps on the east side are well preserved.

The interior of the plinth of the cells was divided up into chambers by cross foundation walls. These chambers were filled up with earth, but it may be assumed that the walls of the superstructure followed the lines of the foundations. The inner wall of the plinth is faced with neatly chiselled bricks and adorned with a variety of moulded patterns which are best preserved in the south-east corner of the quadrangle. In the opposite corner of the court is a well with an inner diameter of 5 feet and surrounded by a low parapet wall, which must have supplied

water for the use of the residents of the monastery. The upper portions of the walls of the building were built with stone. A huge multitude of these stones, consisting of lintels, door-jambs, ceiling slabs, etc., were unearthed in the interior court and outside the building and have been stacked inside the court. The building was entered from the east, the entrance being approached by a broad flight of steps which is now totally ruined. In front of the stairs were found two slabs of stone bearing figures of an indistinguishable goddess (B(*f*) 4 & 5) now preserved in the Museum. These sculptures probably adorned the front of the flank walls of the stairs to the monastery.

The two large courts which, as stated above, precede the main monastery building on the east side, measure 114′ and 290′ from east to west. A general view of them is obtainable from the entrance of the monastery. The floor of the first court was paved with massive slabs of standstone. Several fragments of this pavement were found in position but no sculptures of any kind have yet been traced upon it. These courts were furnished with handsome entrances which are styled First Gateway and Second Gateway in the Plan of Excavations. These gateways were built on the same general plan and design, but the second gateway was a much more elaborate and massive structure than the other. Both were flanked on the outside, with handsome bastions and provided with well-constructed gatekeeper's chambers on the inside. The northern bastion of the First Gateway has survived in good condition. Of the Second Gateway only the foundations remain, and as they go down to a considerable depth namely more than eight feet below the present ground level, they must have supported a high superstructure. The latter has wholly disappeared with the exception of a few

remnants. It will be observed that both these gateways were constructed with the same kind of materials, namely, chiselled brick and stone and in the same style as Monastery I to which they belong. As has been hinted above, it seems quite likely that another and larger gateway and one or more other courts exist further to the east, as well as to the west of the Monastery building. In the latter direction the excavations have already revealed the existence of a large drain which has been exposed for a length of some 52′. It is obvious that this drain belonged to the monastery and carried away all water from the building. Internally, the drain is six feet in height and 3′ 4″ wide so that a man could easily walk in it to clean the drain. The roof and floor are composed of slabs of stone laid side by side.

Monastery II.

Of the remaining three monasteries which are to be assigned to the late Kushana or early Gupta epoch, Monastery II has been unearthed in the area to the west of the principal building of Monastery I, its west wall forming the limit of the Deer Park in that direction. The building is in a very ruinous condition as it is nowhere standing to a height of more than three or four feet above the foundations and some parts have totally disappeared. In plan, the building is analogous to the monastery excavated by Kittœ which has been described above, but the portion so far laid bare comprises only nine chambers on the west side, parts of two chambers in the south-east corner and the greater part of the verandah wall on the south and west sides. The inner open court of the monastery measures 90′ 10″ from east to west, and to judge from the parts exhumed the exter-

nal measurement of the building from side to side must have been about 165′. Of the chambers exposed in the west row, the sixth one from the south end is larger than the others and must have been the central cell on that side. None of the pillars, which supported the roof of the verandah all round the inner court, have survived in the portion of the building so far laid bare, but there is no doubt that they must have been of the same style and material as those of Monasteries III and IV. It may be observed that the base-stones of two of the pillars do exist at the south end of the west verandah wall.

Sir John Marshall's excavations disclose the fact that this monastery is built upon the ruins of an earlier structure. A part of the brick pavement of this latter, which was found in the trench alongside the south verandah wall of Monastery II, is six feet lower than the level of the latter. The wall of the earlier structure is standing to a height of 3½ feet and has been used as a foundation for the later wall above it. It is difficult as yet to ascertain the precise date of this early building; nor is it known whether still earlier structures exist underneath it.

Monastery III.

Monastery III is situated to the east of Monastery I. It occupies a very low level, but we can easily descend to it by a pathway which leads from the south-east corner of the building referred to. In plan the building is similar to Monastery II described above. So far, four chambers on the south and three on the west together with a part of the inner courtyard and the verandah have been excavated. The height of the walls averages 10 feet. The outer wall on the west side is 5′ 6″ thick and just over six feet on the

south. The roof of the verandah, which is about 11 feet broad, was supported on free standing stone pillars at the outer edge and pilasters of the same material engaged in the outer wall of the cells. The capitals of which several specimens were found were of the Hindu bracket type.

The doorways of the cells were 6′ 7″ high and 4′ 2″ broad. They may have been originally fitted with wooden doors which have disappeared. The wooden lintel of the entrance to cell No. 3 from the west end of the south row existed in a rotten condition and has been replaced by a new one. The carved brickwork above the lintel deserves notice. Some of the rooms would appear to have been furnished with window openings fitted with pierced stone screens two of which came to light in this monastery. It will be observed that the bricks used in the interior walls of the cells are not chiselled, presumably because they were originally plastered over, though no plaster was actually noticed in any of the cells excavated. The room to the east of the one just referred to seems to have been the entrance to the monastery. The eastern part of the room could not be excavated as it would have involved the removal of the First Gateway to Monastery I, which stands immediately above it. The exact purpose of the chamber at the back of the third cell on the south side is not known. On the inside it has been dug down to a depth of 17 feet. It has no entrance of any kind, and can only have been some sort of storage chamber or the foundation of an upper room which was entered from the first floor of the monastery.

It will be seen that the courtyard as well as the verandah floor and the floors of the cells are all paved with bricks, laid flat. The water from the courtyard

was carried away by a covered drain in the south-west corner of the monastery. At the mouth of the drain a perforated stone is set up in a vertical position to act as a trap.

Monastery IV.

On returning to the higher ground we pass on our right the remnant of the First Gateway of Monastery I. We proceed towards the east until we reach Monastery IV discovered at a depth of some fifteen feet below the ground level. Only the north-east corner of it with two rooms on the east side and a part of the verandah on the east and north sides have so far been cleared. The major part of the building lies buried to the south of the south boundary wall of Monastery I, which crosses it some ten feet above the level of the floor. Some of the stone columns which supported the open passage around the middle court were found lying flat on the floor and have now been re-erected. These columns are of the same general design as those of Monastery III, though they differ somewhat in details. The verandah is 7′ 6″ to 7′ 10″ in width. The floor of the courtyard which is paved with bricks laid flat slopes slightly towards a drain in the north-east corner which carried off the water from the interior of the building.

The large stone basin lying behind the eastern rooms of this monastery on a much higher level is the pedestal of a colossal Siva image of about 1000 A.D., which we shall see in the Archæological Museum. Here it may be remarked that the image has nothing to do with the Buddhist Monastery we have been describing, as the latter must have been buried deep

under the débris before the image was brought and put up where it has been found.

No other objects of interest were found on this part of the site except a number of iron household utensils which belong approximately to the period when the monastery was destroyed.

Our route now takes us round the north side of the Second Gateway of Monastery I, after which we return westward and then make our way to the south where the lofty tower called Dhamekh rears its head towards the skies. Major Kittœ unearthed a multitude of structures in the area around this tower, but they have all disappeared, and the monuments we now see to the north of the tower were excavated in 1907-08. They range in date from the Gupta period to the 8th or 9th century A.D. These structures consist of *stupas*, chapels, concrete floors, etc., and are built entirely of brick and plaster. Perhaps the most interesting of them all is the plinth of a *stupa*, numbered 74 in the Plan of Excavations, which dates from the Gupta period and is now hidden under a later structure.

Among the moveable antiquities that came to light in this area we may mention a slab of stone bearing a beautifully carved inscription of Kumaradevi, Buddhist queen of Govindachandra of Kanauj in the 12th century A.D.[1] In the same area were discovered three well-preserved sculptures, 3′ 8″ to 4′ in height, of about the 9th century A. D.[2] which in that period might possibly have occupied three of the niches in the projecting faces of the Dhamekh *stupa*.

[1] See page 9 above. This inscription is No. D (*l*) 9 of the Sarnath Museum collection.

[2] These are Nos. B (*c*) 2 and 35 and B (*d*) 8 of the Sarnath Museum collection.

Dhamekh Stupa.

The modern name Dhamekh is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning "the pondering of the Law." This *stupa* is a solid structure rising to a height of 104 feet above the paved terrace of the Jaina temple adjoining it, or 143 feet, if we include the foundations which lie buried underground. The lower part or basement is 93 feet in diameter and solidly built, the stones being secured together with iron cramps to a height of 37 feet above the terrace of the Jaina temple. The upper part of the structure is made of brick which was possibly originally faced with stone.

This facing was presumably cut away by the workmen of Jagat Singh, referred to above, in 1793 A.D. It is to be observed that the damage done to the lower part of the tower by Jagat Singh has recently been partly repaired by the Archæological Survey Department.

The basement is relieved on the outside by eight projecting faces each one of which has a large niche and pedestal which no doubt formerly held an image. As stated above, the three seated images discovered in the area around this monument may possibly have adorned three of the niches in the 9th or 10th century A. D.

The lower part of the basement is adorned with a broad belt of carved ornament consisting of an intricate geometric design with floral arabesques above and below it. The whole body of carving is singularly vigorous and exquisitely beautiful. On the evidence of style, it is attributable to the 7th century A. D., and this, no doubt, is the date of the structure as we now see it. It is interesting to note in this connection that General Cunningham who dug a well into it in 1835 A.D., from the existing top right down to virgin

soil found, some ten feet below the top, a stone slab with an epigraph of about the same date. The inscription contains the well-known Buddhist creed and is now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

The unfinished condition of the carving on the *stupa* seems to show that the building was never completed. It is likewise apparent that this is not the first structure on this spot. The foundations which General Cunningham discovered to be composed of very large bricks such as we find in the monuments of the third and second centuries B.C., must have belonged to an edifice of that period. What that monument was, we have at present no means of ascertaining. It was presumably a *stupa* erected by the emperor Asoka to commemorate some event in the life of Gautama Buddha. Hiuen Thsang, the Chinese traveller referred to above, may have seen this *stupa* but unfortunately it is not yet possible to identify it with any of the monuments described by him.

Hospital (so-called).

The building called by this name in the accompanying plan was discovered a short distance to the west of the Dhamekh *stupa* by Major Kittoe who identified it as a hospital because he found in it a large number of mortars and pestles. This view has been shown to be untenable by the recent excavations as it becomes evident that the monument was a monastery of the usual type. It dated from the 8th or 9th century A.D., and was built upon the remains of an earlier structure of the Gupta period. The upper building faced towards the west. The excavation has been filled in to prevent rain-water collecting in it.

Jaina Temple.

The Jaina temple spoken of above is the modern building situated to the south of the monument just described. It has a high enclosure wall and a spacious open court to the east abutting on the Dhamekh *stupa*. It is dedicated to the 11th Jaina patriarch Sri Amsanatha and was erected in 1824 A. D. There is nothing of archæological interest inside it.

Old sculpture shed.

The Old Sculpture Shed to the west of the Jaina temple was erected by Mr. F. O. Oertel in 1905 for the antiquities discovered by him at Sarnath. All those antiquities have now been placed in the new Archæological Museum. The sculptures now exhibited in this shed are Brahmanical and Jaina sculptures which do not originate from Sarnath.

Of the sculptures preserved in the shed, perhaps the oldest is the image of the river goddess Yamuna, numbered G 2, standing opposite the visitor as he enters the room. The sculpture belongs to the 4th or 5th century A.D. Another sculpture that is assignable to the same period is that numbered G 33. It presumably represents a scene from the Hindu epic Ramayana, namely, the installation by Rama of Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, as king of Ceylon. Among the mediæval sculptures in the shed we notice especially the lintel (G 38), 8′ 3″ wide, bearing the figures of the nine planets, beginning with the sun at the extremity of the left hand sunken panel and ending with the demons Rahu and Ketu at the end of the other panel. Of the three projections, one in the middle, and one at each end of the lintel, the former contains a figure of

Sri, the goddess of wealth. The temple to which the lintel belongs must, therefore, have been dedicated to a Vaishnava deity. The miniature spire shrines of stone placed at the corners of the compound wall are Brahmanical votive shrines none of which are earlier than the late mediæval period.

The New Museum of Archæology.

The new Museum of Archæology stands on the opposite side of the road as we descend from the plateau representing the ancient Deer Park. The construction of this building was proposed by Sir John Marshall soon after the excavations had been taken in hand in 1904-05. The necessary designs were prepared by Mr. James Ransome, then Consulting Architect to the Government of India, who appropriately selected for his model the usual type of the ancient Buddhist monastery, several examples of which have been excavated at Sarnath. The part of the building so far erected represents less than half of the quadrangle of which the Buddhist convent consists; the rest of the building will be completed when more space becomes necessary. A detailed catalogue of the antiquities preserved in the Museum was prepared by the author of this pamphlet under the orders of Dr. J. Ph. Vogel, the then officiating Director General of Archæology in India, and copies of it can be had from the caretaker. Brief descriptive labels are attached to all the more interesting objects.

The room in the north wing is reserved for pottery, terracottas and bricks. The two large earthen *chatis* exhibited on stone stands in the middle of the room were unearthed in the 2nd outer court of Monastery I, and were probably used for the storage

of corn. The next four rooms are reserved for the residence of the Archæological Officers when on duty at Sarnath. The big hall in the middle of the back wing, which in the Buddhist monastery would be the principal chamber or chapel, is set apart for the largest and some of the best statues of the collection. The first sculpture that meets us as we step into the hall is the capital of the Asoka pillar described above. It is just 7 feet high and consists of a Persepolitan bell-shaped lower member surmounted by four lions standing back to back. The middle portion above the fluted bell is a circular drum adorned with the figures of a horse, a lion, an elephant and a bull, the four noble animals of the Buddhists. Speaking of the technique of these figures and the surmounting lions, Sir John Marshall remarks that they "are wonderfully vigorous and true to nature and are treated with that simplicity and reserve which is the keynote of all great masterpieces of plastic art. India certainly has produced no other sculpture to equal them."

The crowning ornament of the capital was a wheel carved in the round, which must have been chosen by the Emperor Asoka in reference to the traditional comparison of the Buddhist doctrine to that symbol. A few fragments only of this wheel were recovered by Mr. Oertel and are exhibited in a show-case near the capital.

The colossal standing statue to the left hand side of the Asoka capital presumably represents Gautama Buddha in the state of Bodhisattva, *i.e.*, before he attained enlightenment or became a Buddha in the thirty-sixth year of his life at Gaya. The statue was originally sheltered by a large stone umbrella. A part of the post of this umbrella is fixed in the

floor behind the statue. Its top which was found broken in ten pieces has been pieced together and set up near the north-east corner of the hall. There are two inscriptions carved on the statue, namely, one in the front of the base and the other on the back of the image and there is a third inscription engraved on the umbrella post. From these epigraphs we learn that the statue and the umbrella were donated by a Buddhist friar named Bala and erected at Benares, at the place where Lord Buddha used to walk, in the 3rd regnal year of the Kushana King Kanishka. There is epigraphical evidence to show that this monk was a resident of Mathura and as the material of the statue and the umbrella is the sandstone of Sikri of which all the sculptures of Mathura are made, the statue with its umbrella must have been carved at Mathura. The large-sized statue standing to the right hand side of the Asoka capital also represents Gautama Buddha and is a faithful copy of the Mathura statue by an artist of Benares. It should be noticed here that these images of the Kushana period are believed to be the direct prototypes of the Gupta and later sculptures of Sarnath.

One of the finest examples of the images of the Gupta period, *i.e.*, the 4th or 5th centrury A.D., which was discovered by Mr. Oertel in 1904-05 is the large seated image placed in the middle of the east wall of the hall immediately behind the Asoka capital. The image represents Gautama Buddha preaching his first sermon at Sarnath. This event is denoted in the sculpture by the peculiar posture of the hands before the chest and by the wheel and the two deer carved on the pedestal. The wheel, as has been hinted above, represents the Good Law discovered by the Buddha, and the deer the Deer Park, modern Sarnath, where the famous first sermon was delivered.

The five monks seated, three to the right and two to the left of the wheel on the pedestal, are the first five disciples of the great Teacher, who had the privilege of listening to the sermon of Sarnath. The woman and the child at the left end of the relief are probably the donors of the image. It is to be observed that the image of the Buddha is clad in the usual monastic robes but they are meant to be of such fine texture that their existence is only indicated by their outline. The execution of the image is exquisite and animated with a peculiar expression of divine repose. Equally noteworthy is the large circular halo around the Buddha's head. The figures at each end of the halo are celestials flying with presents of flowers to the Holy One.

Another interesting sculpture of the late Gupta period is the headless image of Gautama Buddha (B (*b*) 175) to the right of the one just described. The image is seated cross-legged in the "earth-touching" attitude which in Buddhist art symbolizes the temptation of the Buddha by the Evil One, and his subsequent attainment of divine wisdom under a *pipal* tree at Gaya. Some foliage of this tree remains on the top of the halo. The base of the sculpture is fashioned in imitation of a rock to indicate the stone platform, seated on which the Buddha reached supreme wisdom, and the lion's head in the niche presumably represents the Uruvilva forest near Gaya. The female figure holding a vase beneath the right hand of the Holy One is supposed to be the Earth-Goddess rising from the earth to bear testimony to the good works of the Buddha when challenged by the Tempter. The two figures on the other side of the niche are presumably the Evil One himself and one of his daughters who tempted the Holy One and were themselves changed into old hags by his mira-

culous power. The well-preserved inscription on the upper rim of the base supplies the name of the donor of the image who was a Buddhist monk named Bandhugupta.

One other image in the big hall deserves mention. This is the unfinished colossal figure of Siva (B (*h*) 1) standing in the north-west corner of the room. The god is represented as destroying the demon Tripura. The sculpture dates from circa 1000 A.D.

The next room contains images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Buddhist gods and goddesses. The Buddha images are shown in the following five attitudes (Sanskrit *mudra*) :—(1) The attitude of granting security which is indicated by the right hand being raised to the level of the right shoulder with the palm turned to the front. This attitude is found both in standing and seated images. (2) In the gift-bestowing posture the right arm is stretched out downwards with the palm of the hand turned outwards. (3) The attitude of meditation is expressed by the placing of the hands in the lap one over the other. (4) In the earth-touching attitude which symbolizes the moment of the enlightenment of the Buddha, the right hand of the image points down towards the earth. Over the head of the Buddha is shown the foliage of a *pipal* tree (*ficus religiosa*), and beneath his right hand the Earth-Goddess rising from the earth and presenting a treasure vase to the Holy One. (5) In the attitude of preaching or "the turning of the wheel-of-the-law," the hands of the image are held in front of the breast in such a way that the thumb and fore-finger of the right hand just touch the middle finger or the fore-finger of the left hand. Among the Boddhisattva images, the standing figures of Avalokitesvara (B(*d*)1), 4′ 6″ high, Manjusri

(B(*d*) 6), 3′ 10½″high, and Maitreya the Messiah of the Buddhists (B(*d*) 2), 4′ 6″ high, standing against the left jamb of the entrance to the next room, deserve special notice. The attention of the visitor may also be drawn to the group (B(*e*) 1) representing the Buddhist god of wealth Kubera and his consort *Hariti*, both of whom are standing and not seated as is the case in similar sculptures of Gandhara and Mathura. The sculpture dates from about the 11th century A.D. The pieces displayed in the wooden show cases in this room include a number of detached hands and other limbs which are remarkable for their exceptional beauty and delicacy of modelling.

The southern wing of the museum has been set apart for bas-reliefs, architectural stones and inscribed slabs. The bas-reliefs include a number of steles divided on the front into compartments each illustrating some important event in the career of Gautama Buddha. We may briefly notice here two of the best preserved examples. Slab No. C (*a*)1, terminating at the top in a small *stupa*, and which stands near the south-east corner of the room, shows the four principal events of the Buddha's life. The lowest panel contains a representation of the birth of the great Teacher in the Lumbini garden (modern Rummindei) near Kapilavastu. His mother Mayadevi stands in the centre of the composition under a *sala* tree, a branch of which she catches with her right hand. To the proper left of Mayadevi is her sister Prajapati and to her right must have been carved a figure of the god Indra receiving the newborn infant. Behind Prajapati was the infant Buddha receiving a bath, water being poured over his head by two Naga or serpent kings. The scene in the next higher panel shows Gautama Buddha's temptation by the Evil One. To the right of the

Buddha stands the Evil One holding a bow in his left hand and attended by a follower who holds his crocodile standard. The two female figures on the other side are two of the three daughters of the Evil One, while the two demons in the upper corners of the panel belong to his army. The third panel from the bottom shows the Buddha preaching his first sermon. The decease of the Buddha is depicted in the uppermost compartment. The Master is lying in the usual fashion on a couch between the twin *sala* trees of Kusinagara, modern Kasia. The mourners include men and angels. The figure seated in front of the couch with its back turned to the spectator is Subhadra the last convert of the Buddha.

The slab C (*a*) 3 shows the same four principal events as described above and four others. The former four occupy the corners of the slab. Of the rest, the scene beneath the representation of the first sermon shows the descent of Gautama Buddha at Sankasya, modern Sankisa, from the heaven of the thirty-three gods, where he had preached his doctrine to his deceased mother for three months. The standing figures to his right and left are Brahma and Indra. The scene to the right of the one just described shows the miracle of Sravasti, modern Saheth-Maheth on the border of the Gonda and Bahraich districts. The miracle consisted in the Buddha being seen preaching in different places at the same time and was performed to confound the opponents of his doctrine. The panel above the one showing the birth of the Buddha illustrates the presentation of honey to the great Teacher by a monkey in a forest near Kausambi, whither the Buddha had retired owing to the quarrels of his disciples. The event depicted in the panel to the right of the last-

mentioned is the miracle of Rajagriha when the Buddha subdued the ferocious elephant Nalagiri which had been let loose at the instance of his wicked cousin Devadatta in order that it might kill him.

In the west half of this room we see a group of antiquities all of the same type arranged on a high platform. These are votive *stupas* presented by pilgrims at the Deer Park.

Among the sculptures exhibited in the verandah outside is a large lintel of a doorway of the Gupta period, 4th or 5th century A.D. The face of the sculpture is divided into six panels. The panels at the ends of the lintel contain representations of Kubera, the Buddhist god of wealth. The remaining four panels illustrate a legend connected with one of the previous existences of the Buddha in which he was tortured to death by order of a cruel king of Benares named Kalabu, for preaching the virtues of patience to his dancing girls. The two panels in the middle of the lintel show them engaged in a musical performance apparently to lull the king to sleep. The king himself is absent. In the second panel from the right we see the same girls listening to the ascetic while the corresponding panel at the other end shows the torture of the sage by an executioner who is cutting off his right hand with a sword. The two females who try to restrain the executioner from the cruel act must be two of the courtesans.

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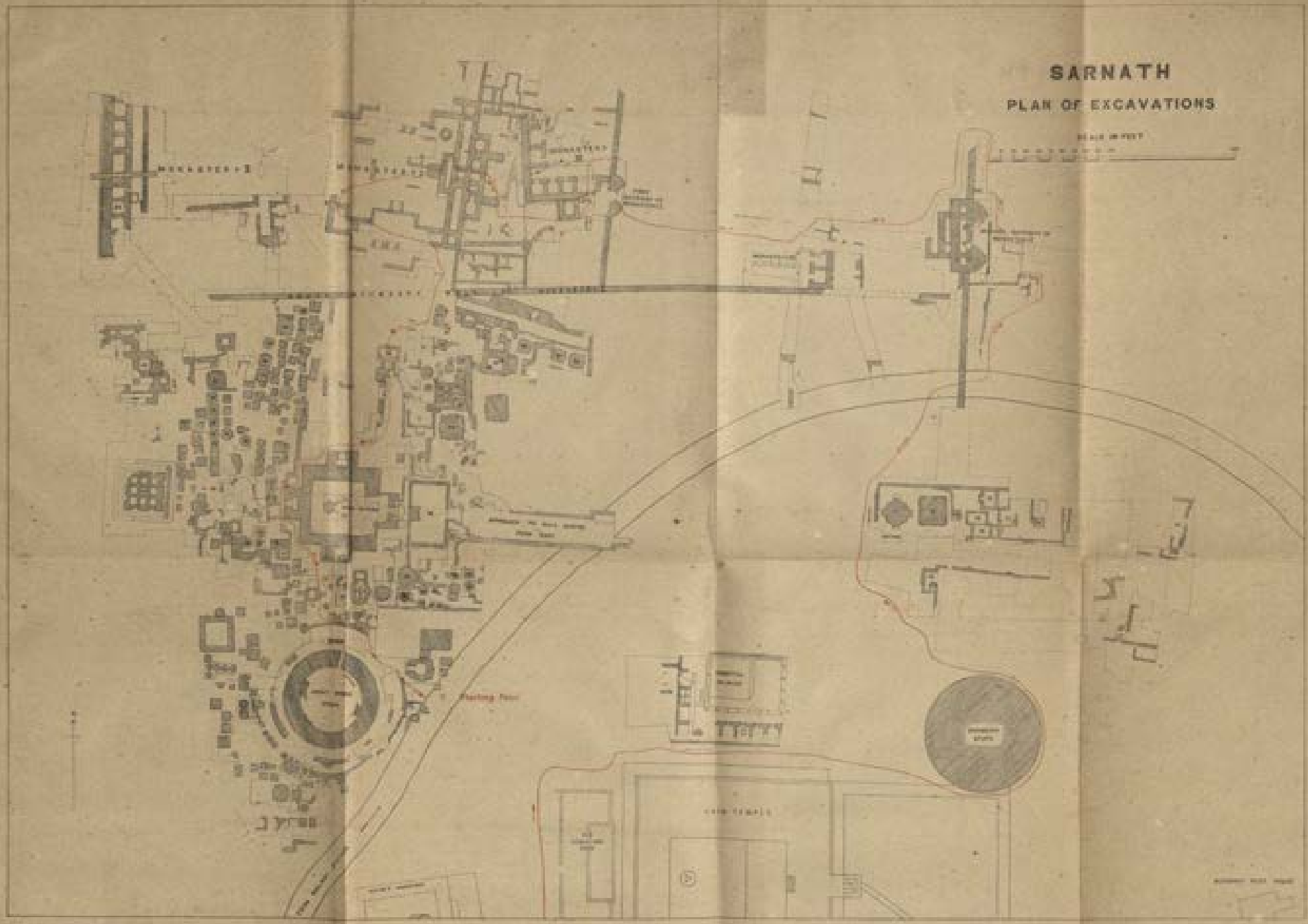

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